

UNWTO's Members in the Americas Advance Common Goals

Punta del Este, Uruguay, 20 May 2022 – *The American Members of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) have met to assess the current state of the sector and plan for its sustainable future. The 67th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas brought tourism leaders from across the region together in the leading destination of Punta del Este, Uruguay.*

Across two days, Tourism Ministers and other high-level representatives, including private sector leaders and delegates from international organizations reviewed UNWTO's leadership of the sector over the past year, with Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili's report focused on key international tourism trends and the Organization's key priorities for the region, including work around education and investments.

High-level support of hosts

The Regional Commission was inaugurated by the President of Uruguay, Luis Lacalle Pou, who was joined Minister of Tourism and host of the gathering, Tabaré Viera, and by the country's Minister of Foreign Relations, Francisco Bustillo. The meeting came just two weeks after Uruguay hosted a global UNESCO conference, reflecting the country's commitment to multilateral cooperation and support for the mission and values of the United Nations, among which tourism for development is key.

President Lacalle welcomed the UNWTO leadership, stating that tourism remains a key part of Uruguay's state economic policy, and the Commission meeting "emphasized the importance of everyone working for the reactivation of tourism", both in Uruguay and across the wider region.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Tourism has proven potential to inspire change and drive growth across the Americas and UNWTO's Member States of the region are showing the way forward in building a tourism sector that works for everyone, with sustainability and inclusiveness at its heart."

Alongside the Commission Meeting, both met in private to further deepen the already-strong partnership between UNWTO and Uruguay, a key ally in the region and promoter of tourism for development across the Americas, including through high-level multilateral platforms and organizations.

Minister Tabaré Viera underscored Uruguay's commitment to restart tourism, reminding participants that this first major tourism gathering in Uruguay since the start of the pandemic, sent a clear message beyond the region itself. The Minister also announced that Uruguay will adhere to the UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists, and so be among the first countries in the world to take firm steps to restore confidence in international travel, further emphasizing Uruguay's commitment to tourism and to keeping tourists safe and protected.

Turning challenges into opportunities

UNWTO Members addressed the key challenges facing tourism today and opportunities for recovery and growth. The debates among member states were complemented by special interventions, including the presentation the Tourism Promotion Hub for Latin America, Latina Tower, in New York City, and by the Latin American Development Bank (CAF).

CAF, the leading investor in infrastructure across the region, addressed for the first time a UNWTO governing body, advancing the newly-established partnership between the Bank and UNWTO. Alongside this, a policy discussion on "Accelerating Recovery and Building Resilience", benefitted from insights of leaders from across the region,

Generating trust

Within the framework of the Regional Commission, Members met for a seminar on the UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists. The landmark legal code, designed to offer tourists more protection and so increase confidence in international travel, was adopted by Members at the UNWTO General Assembly in 2021. Two countries of the Americas, Ecuador and Paraguay have already made steps to incorporating it into national legislation, while Uruguay will initiate the corresponding process. UNWTO's legal experts provided updates on the implementation and workings of the Code, with a focus on addressing existing gaps in the provision of assistance to tourists caught in emergency situations, drawing from lessons of the pandemic.

Next Steps

On the side-lines of the Regional Commission meeting, Secretary-General Pololikashvili met with the Minister of Tourism of Brazil, Carlos Brito, and then separately with Minister of Tourism from Guatemala, Ms. Anayansy Rodríguez, to discuss their countries' tourism sectors and opportunities to work more closely with UNWTO in the post-pandemic recovery phase.

To conclude, Members States voted to hold the 68th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Americas in Ecuador in the first half of 2023.

Related Links:

[UNWTO Regional Department for the Americas](#)

[UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists](#)